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THE ARYAN VILLAGE

The Aryan Village in India and Ceylon. By Sir John B. Phear. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1880.)

IT is now twenty years since a remarkable page in Sir Henry Maine's "Ancient Law" drew attention to the prevalence in India of the village-community, a system of society strange to the modern English mind. Before that work appeared, even special students had little idea how far the ancient communism, under which the Aryan race colonised so much of Asia and Europe, was still to be found not as a mere relic of ancient society, but as the practical condition of modern life among Hindus and Slavs. The historical importance of this early institution is now fully recognised, and our archæologists are alive to the relics of the old village-communities in England. Not only are these seen in the public commons, but here and there in certain fields where, after harvest, the neighbours still have the right of turning their cattle in among the stubbles, while even a few of the great old "common fields," where once each family had its free allotted portion, are still to be discerned by the baulks or ridges of turf dividing them into the three long strips, which again were cut crosswise into the family lots. Thus every contribution to the argument on the development of modern landholding from the communism of ancient times, finds interested readers. The present volume is such a contribution, and in several ways new and important. Sir John Phear thoroughly knows and carefully describes native life in Bengal and Ceylon, and one of his points is the remarkable parallelism of the agricultural village, as it has shaped itself in these two widely-separated districts. Up to a certain stage, the development of the village-community has been everywhere on much the same lines, and those not hard to trace. It springs naturally out of the patriarchal family, which, living together on its undivided land, tilling it in common, and subsisting on the produce, becomes in a few generations a family-community. There are now to be seen in and about Calcutta families of 300 to 400 (including servants) living in one house, and 50 to 100 is a usual number. The property is managed by the *karta*, who is usually the eldest of the eldest branch, and what the members want for personal expenses beside the common board and lodging, he lets them have in small sums out of the common fund. Now and then there is a great quarrel, when the community breaks up and the land is divided according to law. It is easily seen how such a joint-family or group of families settling together in waste unoccupied land would expand into a village-community, where new households when crowded out of the family home would live in huts hard by, but all would work and share together as if they still dwelt under one roof. In fact this primitive kind of village-settlement, according to our author, is still going on at this day in Ceylon. In districts where, as in ancient Europe, patches of forest are still felled and burnt to give a couple of years' crop of grain, and where in the lowlands rice-cultivation requires systematic flooding, we find the whole settlement at work in common in a thoroughly socialistic way. The some-

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what different communistic system prevails more in India, where the land is still the common property of the village, and the cultivated plots are apportioned out from time to time among the families, but these families labour by and for themselves, pay the rent or tax, and live each on the crop of their own raising. In Bengal a step toward our notion of proprietorship is made, where custom more and more confirms each family in permanent ownership of the fields which their fathers have long tilled undisturbed. Tenant-right, so pertinaciously remembered by the Irish peasant, is older in history than the private ownership of land. Next, in the Hindu village as it now exists, a further stage of social growth appears. Families carrying on certain necessary professions have been set apart, or have settled in the village. The hereditary carpenters and blacksmiths and potters follow their trades, the hereditary washerman washes for his fellow-villagers, and the hereditary barber shaves them, paid partly for their services at fixed customary rates, and partly by having their plots of village-land rent free, or nearly so. All this is intelligible and practical enough, and indeed strongly reminds those of us who got our early politics out of "Evenings at Home," of the boy colonists providing for their future wants under the direction of discreet Mr. Barlow, by taking with them the carpenter and the blacksmith and the rest of the useful members of society. But the village-community as it actually exists in India, or Servia, or anywhere else, only forms the substratum of society, on the top of which appear other social elements whose development it is not so easy to trace with certainty. The "gentleman," with his claims to live in a better house than the others whose business is to drudge for him, seemed absurd to Dr. Aikin's political economy, yet he makes his appearance in the Hindu village-community as elsewhere. Sir John Phear seems disposed partly to account for what may be called the landholding class, as well as the endowed priesthood, as having held a privileged position from the first settlement of the villages, and it is in favour of this view that in such settlements the founder's kin naturally have superior rights over the land to new-comers. But he does not the less insist on another and yet stronger social process which has tended to give to individuals a landlord-right over fields they do not till. When quarrels between two villages end in actual war, the conquering warriors (whose claims however seem to be here somewhat confused with the rights of the chief's family) would be rewarded for their prowess by grants of land carved out of the common lands of the conquered village, and the new lords being absentees would naturally put in tenants who would pay in return a share of the crops. Such metayage, or farming "on shares," is as common in India as in the south of Europe, and is evidently the stage out of which arose our rent-system of landlord and tenant.

One great value of books like the present is in showing the analogies and differences of social institutions which have much of their history in common with our own, but have developed under other conditions. Feudal lordship and feudal sovereignty have in the East overridden the old village-system in ways curiously like those of the West. Thus, as Sir John Phear says, the English manor was the feudal form of the Oriental village; the Bengal

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zamindar collects rents from his ryots and pays to the superior holder, or the Crown, living on the difference. Singhalese villagers may do suit and service either to a feudal chieftain or a Buddhist monastery, much as in England the fief might have been held either by a fighting baron or a praying abbot. It is interesting to find in Ceylon the notion that the existing tenure of land comes from the king having granted it subject to service, whereas its real history seems just the opposite, that the village-community came first, which the sovereign made himself paramount over and levied land-tax from. This reminds us of the theory of English law, that a cottager pastures his donkey on the common by sufferance of the lord of the manor, whose waste it is; the fact being that the peasant is exercising a relic of his old village-rights which has escaped the usurpation of the feudal system, and outlived it.

Though the village-community is much broken down in the districts so well described by Sir John Phear, it still shows the old framework in the division of the tilled land in allotments to each ryot, and the equitable settlement of rights and duties by the *mandal* or headman and his *panchayat* or village-council, which is one of the most admirable features of the ancient patriarchal system. But on the whole the village commune here shows practical results by no means admirable, and the husbandman's life on the roadless mud-flats of Bengal, minutely drawn by the author in all its details of dreary poverty and ignorance and hatred of improvement, is about as depressing a social picture as can be met with.

EDWARD B. TYLOR

NILE GLEANINGS

Nile Gleanings. By Villiers Stuart of Dromana, M.P. (London: John Murray, 1879.)

THE land of Egypt has of late caused the issue of a multitude of books, and that in consequence of the increased knowledge which half a century of Egyptian research has produced. Classical authorities no longer avail the traveller; he requires translations from the original hieroglyphic inscriptions, an insight into the discovery of a new world of antiquity and an acquaintance with the recent excavations which have revealed to the eye of the traveller an unveiled city of the dead. Scriptural texts alone garnished the older voyages. Above all the accomplished traveller should be acquainted with the various sciences which enable him to detect what is new or salient in the country that he visits, and its development, political institutions, progress, or decay should be seen at a glance even if it demands pages to describe them. The grand Egyptian tour is however a promenade of the land of monuments. Mr. Villiers Stuart's "Nile Gleanings" follow the usual track, and offer to the archaeologist, besides the usual discussions on art, hieroglyphs, and language, and an occasional notice on the fauna and flora of Egypt, several new facts of archaeological interest. At the description of Meidoum, the period of which is now known to be that of Senofrou, the tomb of Nofre Maat, with its strange figures inlaid with incrustations of red ochre, is new and interesting for its peculiar art and its remote age of the third dynasty; nor less important is the discovery of the flint flakes, the *albriss* of the old chisels

which sculptured it. Other tombs at the spot were remarkable for their gigantic masonry. These belong indeed to the more recent discoveries, but the traveller paid his respects to the dog mummy pits at Bebe, and the sites of Minieh and Dayr-el-Nakel. Considerable interest attaches to the heretical worshippers of the sun's disk, who flourished about the close of the eighteenth dynasty, and who endeavoured to remove the capital of Egypt from Thebes with "its hundred gates," to Tel-el-Amarna or Psinaula. The idea fashionable amongst Egyptologists has been that Amenophis III. of that line, the king, one of whose statues is the celebrated vocal Memnon, commenced an attempted religious reform and tried to substitute the worship of the sun's disk or orb, the Aten as it is called, for that of the god Amen-Ra, or the hidden sun. To this it is supposed that he was invited by the undue influence of his wife, Tai or Taiti. After his death it is conjectured that he was succeeded by his brother, Amenophis IV., and that this Amenophis IV. was a convert of the most pronounced zeal for the worship of the solar orb or pure Sabæanism. For this purpose, from the Amehpt, or the Peaceful Amen, he changed his name to Khuenaten, the Light or Spirit of the Sun. The chief data for this arrangement of the monarchs of the period of the eighteenth dynasty were the stones used for the construction of the Pylon or gateway of Haremhebi or Horus of the same dynasty, which were found to have been taken from an edifice of the so-called disk worshippers at Thebes, and built with their faces inside the wall, exhibiting the erasure of the name of Amenophis IV. and the substitution of Khuenaten in the cartouches for Amenophis. Some objections indeed might have been taken from the fact that the features of Amenophis and Khuenaten were different, it being of course facile to adopt a new faith, impossible to secure fresh features, even such unenviable ones as those of Khuenaten. Mr. Villiers Stuart discovered a new tomb at Thebes, with Amenophis IV. and his queen on one side of the door and Khuenaten with his queen on the other, both dissimilar in features, arrangement, and condition—one perfect, the other mutilated. As both sovereigns could hardly have occupied the same sepulchre, evidently one of the two appropriated the construction of his predecessor. The theory of Mr. Villiers Stuart is that Khuenaten was a foreigner, which has been always asserted, although it is more difficult to decide to which of the races of mankind he belonged; there are however some reasons to believe that after all he may come from Nubia or the South. The discovery of this tomb is in fact the principal new point of the work, and is the one new and important contribution to the obscure history of the heretical division which took place about the thirteenth century B.C.

The various sites of Esneh, Dendera, Assouan, Philæ, and the Nubian temples are well known, but are described in a light and graceful way, and much old material reproduced in a polished and not pedantic form. Necessarily a great deal is already well known to the student, and no inconsiderable portion to the general public. As to chronology the numerous systems and theories which have been started, amounting in all to above 200, allow any choice which suits best the proclivities of the inquirer. The present work has a new date for Rameses II., and throws his reign back to B.C. 1567, but it is difficult if not